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SUBJECT: ESTONIA: CUBA TITLE III INFORMATION

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Classified By: Classified By: DCM Karen Decker for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) On December 6, PolEcoff met with Urmas Eigla, MFA Cuba Desk Officer, to discuss Estonia's ties with Cuba. Eigla confirmed that the information he shared with us in May of 2007 is still valid. Specifically, Eigla reiterated that neither Cuba nor Estonia has any foreign direct investments in each others countries and no bi-lateral trade agreements exist between the two. In addition, there are no official exchange programs between Estonia and Cuba and there have been no official high-level diplomatic visits between the two countries during the last six months.

¶2. (SBU) Estonia has no diplomatic presence in Cuba and vice versa. While the Government of Estonia (GOE) supports the EU positions on human rights abuses in Cuba, it is not active in monitoring events in Cuba. However, over the last few months, GOE officials and parliamentarians have participated in some Cuba related activities.

¶3. (SBU) In August 2007, Estonian Member of Parliament Andres Herkel spent six days in Cuba as a member of an unofficial delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (COE). The delegation, headed by Matyas Ersi of Hungary, met with Cuban dissidents and presented the Sahharov award on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly of the COE to the political prisoners' spouses' organization Damas de Blanco. The delegation also participated in a weekly Havana protest walk, a move that nearly resulted in their expulsion from Cuba.

¶4. (SBU) While in Cuba, MP Herkel also met with Cuban opposition leaders Oswaldo Paya, Vladimiro Roca and Marta Beatriz Roque. The group discussed the Eastern European experiences with good governance and economic reforms. MP Herkel commented after the trip that the most pressing problems in Cuba are human rights violations and the situation of political prisoners.

¶5. (SBU) In addition, in August 2007, MP Andres Herkel, along with MP Silver Meikar, MP Mart Laar, MP Marko Mihkelson, MFA Head of Division Juri Kahn and MFA/Cuba Desk Officer Urmas Eigla, attended a joint IRI/Vilnius University program on linking the Baltic experience to the promotion of democracy in Cuba. Mart Laar gave the keynote address at the seminar in which he proposed ideas on how Estonia can offer knowledge and experience to Cubans.  
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